

## A Brief Overview of Design Charrettes

This synopsis of design Charrettes is taken from a publication written by Bill Lennertz called “The Charrette as an Instrument of Change”, and published in *New Urbanism: Comprehensive Report & Best Practices Guide*, 3rd Edition, Ithaca NY: New Urban Publications, 2003. Pp. 12-2 to 12-8. Additional information is also available from the National Charrette Institute web site -- [www.charretteinstitute.org](http://www.charretteinstitute.org).

A Charrette is a multi-day planning process during which an interdisciplinary professional design team creates a complete and buildable plan (typically based on Smart Growth and Traditional Neighborhood principles) that reflects the input of all stakeholders who are involved by engaging them in a series of feedback loops. It is a comprehensive and intensive planning process to bring transformative change to a neighborhood or planning area.

As Mr. Lennertz states, “charrettes offer much more than just a quick fix”, and they result in lasting, transformative change. A Charrette requires a carefully planned and orchestrated process that starts well before the actual Charrette and continues long after it.

The National Charrette Institute (NCI) suggests that there are nine strategies that differentiate an authentic Charrette from other planning processes. Further information on these strategies is available at the NCI website.

1. Work collaboratively
2. Design cross-functionally
3. Use design to achieve a shared vision and create holistic solutions
4. Work in detail
5. Constrain work schedules
6. Communicate in short feedback loops
7. Work for at least four to seven consecutive days
8. Work on site
9. Produce a buildable plan